

Love and Rage

Special Anti-Cop Issue !!!

New York

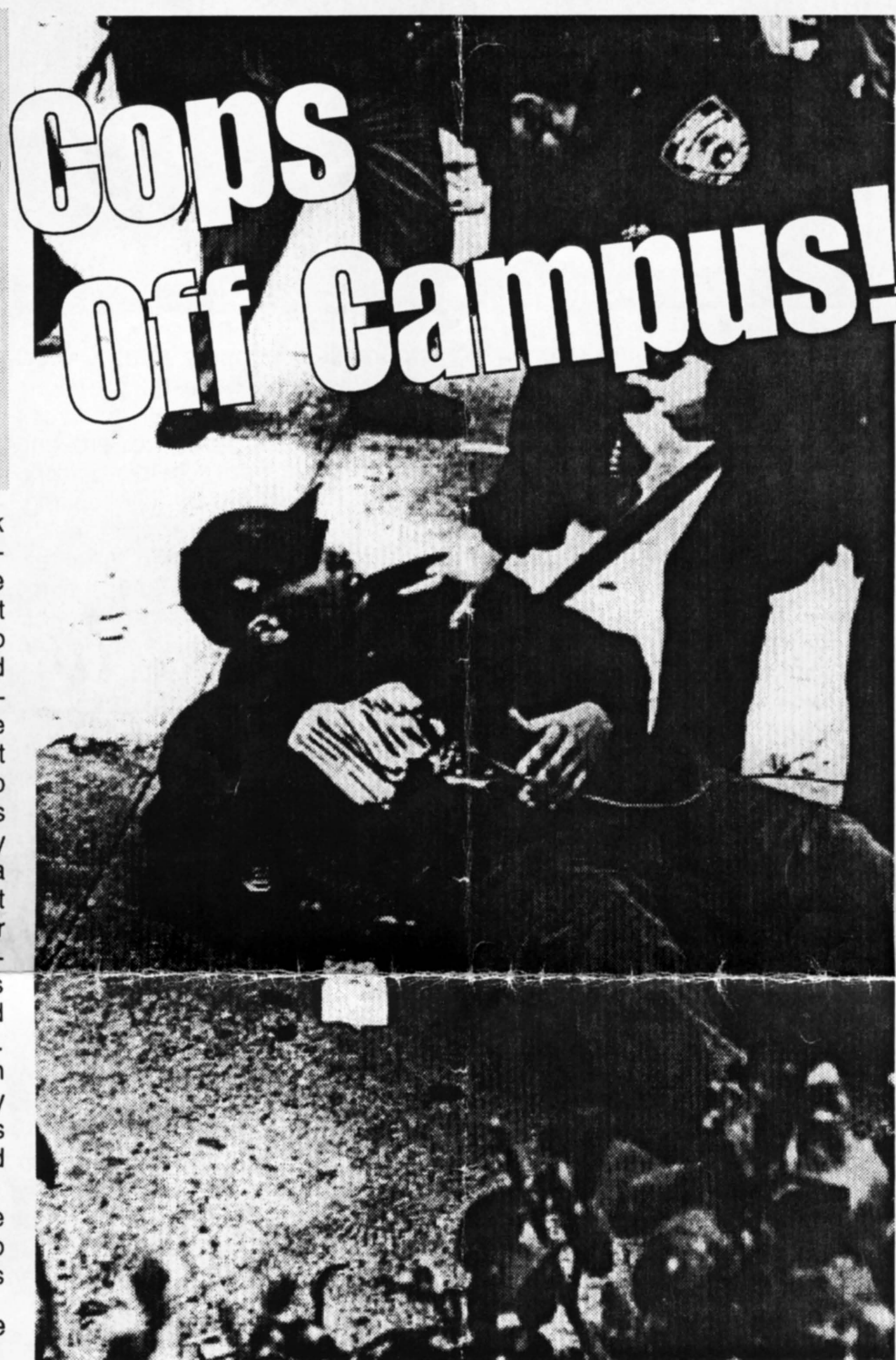
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Love and Rage
Revolutionary Anarchist Federation
New York

York Calls Cops to Quash Speech

On November 6, Black Solidarity Day, administration officials at York College in Jamaica, Queens called riot cops onto the college campus to prevent Khalid Abdul Muhammad of the Nation of Islam from speaking at an event organized by the York College Black Student Caucus. Students responded to this blatant attempt to suppress free expression on campus by preparing to fight the police. In a minor confrontation one student was arrested but not charged after he refused to show his identification. York College administrators finally backed down and Muhammad was allowed to speak. But even then the administration sought to limit free discussion by posting cops at the campus gates to limit admission to students and faculty members.

The incident reflected the increasing political repression to be found on all CUNY campuses

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The Cops are Out of Control

Last spring when 30,000 students tried to march on Wall Street to protest proposed budget cuts they were savagely attacked by riot cops. After the Puerto Rican Day parade cops in Brooklyn attacked Puerto Ricans celebrating in the street and dragged people from their homes. In the Bronx cops pumped 22 bullets into Anthony Rosario and Hilton Vega, 11 in their backs. Cops in Queens attacked a Pentecostal congregation, macing and clubbing children and adults alike.

The Cops are Keeping Busy on Campus as Well

When students at City College organized a peaceful hunger strike against the cuts, the cops came on campus for the first time in 26 years and arrested them. In jail they were denied water in an attempt to break their hunger strike. A specially trained team of cops, the SAFE Team, has been set up specifically to crush demonstrations on campus. The NYPD And CUNY administration have been working together to spy on students, compiling a blacklist of student activists that includes information on their race and GPA. Campus security have followed students to off-campus demonstrations to spy on them.

The Function of the Police

While budget cuts have resulted in tuition increases, financial aid cuts, faculty lay-offs and closed classes, we are witnessing a dramatic growth in spending on campus security and an increasing police presence on campus. The cops need special permission to go onto the campuses of elite universities like Columbia, but they have been given free access to CUNY. As always we can expect this expansion of police powers to be justified in the name of fighting crime. But a look at how the police act in our communities should teach us not to trust such arguments.

The real function of the police is to protect the existing social order by keeping poor people in general, and people of color in particular, in line. The cops and CUNY administration know that as cuts in education, welfare, medicare, and other social services are implemented people are going to stand up and fight back. The increased police presence at CUNY, like increased police repression in our communities, is part of a larger war on the poor. While our communities are being devastated by budget cuts money is pouring into expanding police forces to keep us down and building new prisons for when we

Pigs Kill Loisaida Youth, Community Takes to Streets to Demand Justice

On October 13 Abe Richardson, a resident of the Lilian Wald housing projects on the Lower East Side of Manhattan was brutally murdered by the New York Police Department. The killing occurred after a buy-and-bust operation by the cops on Avenue D. Abe was a bystander during the bust and sped away on his bicycle when the arrests occurred. The police pursued him even though they admit he was not a target of the operation. By the time the chase ended Abe was dead. The police later admitted to firing over 50 rounds at him. Witnesses to the murder reported that the cops stood over Abe and repeatedly fired shots into his chest as he lay on the ground.

Word of the slaying quickly spread through the Wald houses and an angry

protest of over 200 community residents began within half an hour of the shooting. The NYPD responded as they normally do to militant demonstrations and quickly mobilized riot cops to disperse the demonstration. The residents of Lilian Wald had other things in mind and responded to the NYPD by throwing bottles and punching the cops. The police reconsidered the situation and retreated, allowing the demonstration to continue. Four cops were sent to the hospital as a result of the confrontation.

The following evening there was a second demonstration that wound its way around the Lower East Side shouting anti-cop slogans. A large glass candle holder was thrown at a cop car but otherwise there were no further confrontations with the cops.

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refuse to stay in our place. We don't have to put up with this. We can fight for a better way to live and an important part of that fight must be to get the cops out of our lives.

What We Want

Last spring a powerful and vibrant movement was born at CUNY. That movement will continue this year. But if it is to succeed we need to fight for some basic democratic rights. We need the freedom to organize on campus free of police repression. Accordingly, there are some things this movement needs to fight for if we are serious about changing our situation:

- Campuses not Fortresses — We want our campuses accessible to all the people in our communities. Because knowledge is power the resources of the university should be available to everybody.
- No Monitoring Student Activists — We demand that student records be kept confidential and that the cops stop harassing student activists.
- Cops Off Campus — The cops have no place in a university. We demand the abolition of the SAFE Team.
- Student Run Security — We can protect ourselves without relying on cops and security who are not about protecting us anyway.

What Kind of Movement?

If we want to win these things we need to build the kind of movement that can get the job done. We should have no illusions that we will not be targeted by the very authorities we are attacking. We need to educate our fellow students about what the cops are really about and what they are doing on our campuses. We need to be prepared to take the kind of direct action that forces the powers that be to take us seriously. We need to build a movement that is truly democratic. A democratic movement that isn't dominated by a handful of people is our best protection against repression — it means they can't arrest or expel a few people and defeat us.



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these days. This was the third year that York administrators have interfered with Black Solidarity Day events. But it was the first time they brought cops on campus to keep a speaker out.

The incident also illustrates why it is important that all CUNY students unite to kick the cops off campus. Khalid Abdul Muhammad is notorious for his homophobic and anti-Semitic statements. The politics he preaches are a dead

end that can only divide oppressed peoples. But CUNY students must have the freedom to determine this for themselves. By using the police to prevent Muhammad from speaking York administrators are craftily seeking to divide students against each other at a time when another round of budget cuts looms over us. Whatever we think of Muhammad we should not allow them to play us like that.

York College Acting President Thomas K. Minter explained his decision to allow Muhammad to speak saying "I knew that the students would never win if they went up against the police." But the York College incident proves exactly the opposite point. It was precisely because York students were willing to put their bodies on the line and stand up to the cops that they were able to force Minter to back down.

Copwatch: Keeping An Eye on the Cops

For example, there is a Copwatch project in Minneapolis organized by Anti-Racist Action (ARA). They are inspired by the tradition of the Black Panther Party, which organized people to watch the cops. A

How can ordinary citizens protect ourselves from the violence of lawless police? What can we do when the police act like just another street gang, one with blue colors? In cities and neighborhoods around the country, people have organized Copwatch patrols. They follow police on their beats, as they go about their "business," and record their behavior with cameras or video cameras. They take notes. This is completely legal, so long as the people do not physically "interfere with police business." Even that might be arguably legal, when the police are engaged in criminal behavior. But just by following and watching the cops, people break down the blue wall of secrecy which surrounds the police. It undermines the confidence of the police that they can do whatever they want with impunity. And it gives other people the message that the police need to be watched. It shows people that the cops' authority can be questioned and encourages them to question it themselves.

group has been going out every other Friday or Saturday evening for almost a year now in downtown Minneapolis. They talk to people and hand out information about ARA and what to do if arrested and, of course, watch the police. During arrests and traffic stops they are witnesses to police conduct and intervene as much as possible. When they are loud enough, the police sometimes let go the person they were arresting and focus on the Copwatchers.

The Minneapolis Copwatchers are generally perceived as a white group. While people of color also do Copwatch, being seen as "white" has some advantages. It gives them the privilege to take things further with the police. They can sometimes get away with things cops rarely tolerate from people of color. They feel that it is important for white folks to take a stand against the cops, to show that they are not all loyal to this oppressive system.

A similar patrol has been organized in Boston. Instead of concentrating on a single area the Boston Copwatch uses a car, a police scanner and a cellular phone to make sure that they are there when the cops are taking action against people in the community.

The police force is one of the most oppressive institutions in many people's lives, especially people of color and working class people. It is hard to find any African-American who has not been harassed, arrested, or assaulted by the police; it is not a question of whether or not it has happened but how many times. Taking a stand against the police is a move against a kind of racism and class oppression that is only slightly more disguised than nazi skinhead violence but is actually more concrete and real. The police, after all, have the power of the law and the state behind them.

The main way to "fight crime" is to create decent jobs and a just society. On the road to that new world it will be necessary to do away with specialized police (and military) forces over and above the rest of society. The police see themselves as at war with the rest of the population. This makes them perfect tools for the white corporate rich men who rule us. Moving to a free society will require replacing the specialized police with self-policing, with a democratic, popular militia system. Copwatch is a step in that direction.

We support the call for a city-wide cops off campus campaign

- COPS OFF CAMPUS!
- STOP CUNY/NYPD SPYING ON STUDENTS!
- FOR STUDENT CONTROL OF CAMPUS SECURITY!

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